



AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 16, Chapter 15, Section 50, relative to domestic violence.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:**

Section 1. Tennessee Code Annotated Section 16-15-50 is hereby amended by adding the following as a newly designated subsection:

- (a) In addition to the authority granted the judge of Division X in the preceding sections, such judge may appoint one (1) or more suitable person or persons to act as referee or referees at the pleasure of the judge. A referee shall be licensed to practice law in this state and shall hold office at the pleasure of the judge. The compensation of a referee shall be fixed by the judge with the approval of the legislative body of the county to which this act applies, and paid from public funds.
- (b) The judge may direct that any case or class of cases shall be heard in the first instance by the referee in all cases wherein the Division X court has jurisdiction in the manner provided for the hearing of such cases by the court.
- (c) A referee has the same authority as the judge to issue any and all process. The referee in the conduct of the proceedings has the powers of a trial judge.
- (d) Any party may, within five (5) days after a case is heard by a referee, excluding non-judicial days, file a request for a hearing by the judge of Division X. the judge may, on the judge's own motion, order a rehearing of any matter heard before a referee, and shall allow a hearing if a request for such hearing is filed as herein prescribed. Unless the judge orders otherwise, the recommendation of the referee shall be the decree of the court pending a hearing.
- (e) In case no hearing before the judge is requested or when the right to a hearing is waived, the findings of the referee shall become the decree of the court.
- (f) All prior sections governing the organization, jurisdiction, and management of Division X court referred to in this act, which are not in conflict with this section are hereby repealed.

Section 2. This Act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.